

Message Text

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22-11

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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SUBJECT: US STATEMENT TO SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE ON UNRWA

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF NOVEMBER 18 STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR
WHITE TO SPC DURING ITS CONSIDERATION OF UNRWA

QUOTESIR JONN RENNIE, THE DISTINGUISHED COMMISSIONER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY (UNRWA)
HAS TOLD US THAT THE AGENCY IS FACING A CRISIS UNEQUALED IN
ITS 25 YEARS OF EXISTENCE. MY DELEGATION BELIEVES THAT THIS
SOMBER WARNING IS ONE WHICH MUST BE HEEDED BY EVERY NATION
REPRESENTED IN THIS ROOM TODAY. WE ARE FACED NOT SOLELY OR
EVEN PREDOMINANTLY WITH THE POSSIBILITY THAT AN ORGANIZATION
OF TESTED MERIT IS IN DEEP TROUBLE. NO, MR CHAIRMAN, THE
PROSPECT WE FACE IS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT, MUCH
MORE PRESSING, AND POTENTIALLY MUCH MORE TRAGIC ,
FOR WE ARE DISCUSSING THE LIVES OF THE MILLION AND A HALF
REFUGEES WHO DEPEND SO DIRECTLY ON UNRWA. IN VERY PRACTICAL
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TERMS, WE MUST FACT THE FACT THAT UNLESS VERY STRENUEOUS EFFORTS

ARE MADE, THE LIVES OF THE REFUGEES COULD BE DRAMATICALLY CHANGED FOR THE WORSE, PARTICULARLY BY THE ELIMINATION OF THE MAJOR PART OF UNRWA'S EDUCATIONAL SERVICES.

IT IS UNRWA'S SCHOOLS WHICH WILL SUFFER EXPECIALLY IF EXPENDITURES MUST BE REDUCED TO THE LEVEL OF CONTRIBUTIONS WHICH UNRWA ESTIMATES FOR THIS YEAR, AND THER YEARS AHEAD. THERE CAN BE NO OTHER WAY IN 1976, FOR EXAMPLE, TO REDUCE A BUDGET OF \$140 MILLION TO ACCOMMODATE A DEFICIT OF \$55 MILLION. WE CANNOT ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN, UNRWA'S SCHOOLS MEANT MORE THAN A QUARTER OF A MILLION SCHOOL CHILDREN, AND OVER 4,300 VOCATIONAL STUDENTS - OF WHOM 92 PERCENT WILL BE EMPLOYED UPON GRAUDATION. UNRWA'S SCHOOLS ALSO MEAN OVER 8,000 TEACHERS, ALL OF THEM REFUGEES THEMSELVES. UNRWA'S SCHOOLS MEAN FINALLY THE EMPLOYMENT NOW AND UPON GRADUATION OF THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES ECAH YEAR, PROVIDING BETTER AND USEFUL LIVES NOT ONLY FOR THEMSELVES, BUT FOR THE THOUSNAD MORE WHO ARE OR WILL BE DEPENDENT UPON THEM. AND THERE IS YET A FURTHER CONSEQUENCE - THE EDUCATION PROVIDED BY UNRWA IS A DYNAMIC IN WHAT FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS HAS BEEN AN OTHERWISE STATIC SITUATION. WHILE THE SEARCH FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE REFUGEES CONTINUES, UNRWA HAS ALREADY ADDRESSED THAT FUTURE BY GIVING THE REFUGEES AND THEIR CHILDREN SOME OF THE RESOURCES TO MEET IT.

MR CHAIRMAN, EDUCATION IS AMONG THE MOST VITAL SERVICES THAT UNRWA PROVIDES. WITH THE STRONG SUPPORT OF THE REFUGEES THEMSELVES, UNRWA HAS DECIDED TO GIVE THE MAXIMUM SUPPORT TO ITS SCHOOLS, EVEN AT THE COST OF GREATER AUSTERITY IN ITS OTHER SERVICES. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT FOR MANY YEARS UNRWA EXPENDITURES ON EDUCATION HAVE EQUALED 37 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL BUDGET, AND AMOUNT ROUGHLY EQUAL TO THAT SPENT ON RELIEF.

THE COMMISSIONER GENERAL WAS QUITE CORRECT, IN NOTING UNRWA'S ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR, THAT TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF REFUGEE STATUS CAN BE NO OCCASION FOR CELEBRATION. HOWEVER, TO UNRWA'S GREAT CREDIT IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT ALTHOUGH THAT STATUS TRAGICALLY CONTINUES, THE AGENCY HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THOUSANDS OF THE REFUGEES TO ACQUIRE THE MODERN SKILLS
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TO SUPPORT CONSTRUCTIVE LIVES. THE MEMBERS HAVE MADE ONLY NOMINAL CONTRIBUTIONS. THE COMMISSIONER GENERAL HAS ASKED, WITH EVERY JUSTIFICATION, THAT UNRWA'S CHRONIC FINANCIAL WEAKNESS BE ENDED.

THIS REQUIRES - LET US ACKNOWLEDGE IT HERE AND NOW- THE UNRWA'S INCOME MUST RISE ANNUALLY TO MEET THE INCREASES IN COSTS FROM FACTORS SUCH AS INFLATION AND CURRENCY DIVALUTATION OVER WHICH THE AGENCY HAS NO CONTROL. LET ME NOTE HERE THAT THE

UNITED STATES HAS RESPONDED TO THE APPEALS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND THE COMMISSIONER GENERAL IN 1975 WITH TWO SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN ADDITION TO OUR REGULAR PLEDGE. THE TOTAL AMOUNTED TO NEARLY 40 PERCENT OF ALL GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO UNRWA. HOWEVER, ALL MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS MUST NOW RESPOND IF REGULAR INCREASES OF THIS SIZE ARE TO BE MET. UNDER-CONTRIBUTORS AND NON-CONTRIBUTORS MUST TAKE THEIR PART OF THE RESPONSIBILITY WHICH THEIR VOTES IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR UNRWA RESOLUTIONS OVER THE YEARS HAVE CREATED.

IT IS OUR CHALLENGE, OUR COMMITMENT, AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO SUSTAIN THE HOPE UNRWA HAS BROUGHT TO THOSE IT SERVES. LET US - ALL OF US - DISCHARGE THAT DUTY TOGETHER.

THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION INTRODUCES DRAFT RESOLUTION A/SPC/L.335 IN FULL RECOGNITION OF THE SITUATION DESCRIBED BY COMMISSIONER GENERAL SIR JOHN RENNIE. IN DOING SO, WE CALL UPON ALL MEMBER STATES OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO MAKE THE MOST GENEROUS EFFORTS POSSIBLE TO MEET THE ANTICIPATED NEEDS OF UNRWA.
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